

cases against civilians in military courts; and

Whereas, on July 25, 2017, the Organization of American States Secretary General Luis Almagro convened public hearings to review whether the Government of Venezuela has committed crimes against humanity and should be referred to the International Criminal Court: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses its profound concern about the humanitarian impacts of the crisis suffered by the people of Venezuela, including widespread shortages of basic food commodities and essential medicines;

(2) urges President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro to permit the delivery of international humanitarian assistance;

(3) calls on the Government of Venezuela to immediately release all political prisoners and to respect internationally recognized human rights;

(4) calls on the Government of Venezuela to ensure the neutrality and professionalism of all security forces and to respect the Venezuelan people's rights to freedom of expression and assembly;

(5) supports the Secretary General of the Organization of American States in his review of whether the widespread human rights abuses in Venezuela warrant an investigation by the International Criminal Court; and

(6) urges the President of the United States to provide full support for OAS efforts in examining the human rights situation in Venezuela and to instruct appropriate Federal agencies to hold officials of the Government of Venezuela accountable for violations of United States law and abuses of internationally recognized human rights.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of David J. Ryder, of New Jersey, to be Director of the Mint, and Isabel Marie Keenan Patelunas, of Pennsylvania, to be Assistant Secretary of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of the Treasury, dated December 20, 2017.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 20, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. in room SD-406 to conduct a hearing entitled "Freight Movement: Assessing Where We Are Now and Where We Need to Go".

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 489, 498, 509, 531, and 532; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Bruce D. Jette, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army; James E. McPherson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army; Randall G. Schriver, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; Thomas Harker, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy; and John P. Roth, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 571, 572, 573, 574, and 575.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Duane A. Kees, of Arkansas, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas for the term of four years; Stephen R. McAllister, of Kansas, to be United States Attorney for the District of Kansas for the term of four years; Ronald A. Parsons, Jr., of South Dakota, to be United States Attorney for the District of South Dakota for the term of four years; Ryan K. Patrick, of Texas, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas for the term of four years; and Michael B. Stuart, of West Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of West Virginia for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc

with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kees, McAllister, Parsons, Patrick, and Stuart nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, on January 3, 2018, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 508. I ask consent that there be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD. I further ask that notwithstanding rule XXXI, the nomination be held in status quo into the second session of the 115th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar Nos. 560 through 569 and all nominations placed on the Secretary's desk; that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Anthony J. Cotton